
Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Meeting Date: 7/2/2024

Title: Amendments to Administrative Code - Chapter 5, Acceptance of Gifts Policy

File Number: 2024-235

Background and Rationale:

This request for board action proposes revisions to Administrative Code, Chapter 5.40.03, Acceptance of Gifts and rescission of two resolutions cited above for a more consistent, countywide approach to the acceptance and tracking of gifts to the county.

Administrative Code 5.40.03, Acceptance of Gifts, sets forth the authority granted by the Ramsey County Board to the County Manager to administratively accept gifts on behalf of Ramsey County. It sets forth specific conditions for each of four categories of gifts: monetary, financial instruments and intellectual property, personal property, and real property.

Only the Ramsey County Board has authority to accept gifts or donations valued at or above \$10,000. Administrative Code, Chapter 5.40.03, Acceptance of Gifts, delegates authority to the County Manager to accept gifts of cash and personal property (including securities) valued under \$10,000, with some exceptions. Resolution 85-549 delegates authority to the Trustees of the Ramsey County Public Library to accept gifts of cash, books, and other materials and equipment valued under \$5,000 to the Library. The Ramsey County Board also currently delegates authority to the Parks and Recreation Director to accept gifts of cash or personal property up to \$500 per Resolution 88-554.

Major Changes Proposed

In the black-line mark-up attached, deletions are shown with strikethrough text (~~strikethrough~~) and additions are shown in **underlined and bold** text. Text that is underlined but not bold does not represent any change; it indicates language contained in the Ramsey County Home Rule Charter.

The proposed revisions to the Administrative Code, Chapter 5.40.03 would:

- Authorize the County Manager to delegate gift acceptance to deputy county managers for monetary (cash) gifts and gifts of personal property up to \$1,000.
- Authorize the County Manager to delegate authority to deputy county managers to delegate authority to department directors to accept (on behalf of the county) gifts of personal property (not monetary gifts) valued up to \$1000. This would allow department directors besides the Parks & Recreation director to accept donations of items such as books, games, clothing, and objects with historical significance to the county.
- Direct the county manager to establish standard requirements for fundraising campaigns initiated by county staff. Delegation authorities for accepting gifts received during fundraising campaigns are the same as for other gifts.
- Prohibit advisory boards from accepting gifts on behalf of Ramsey County.
- Direct the County Manager to create donor recognition policy and standards.
- Add language on how tenant improvements and alterations to county owned property should be treated, authorizing the County Manager to accept improvements and alterations valued less than \$10,000.

- Establish standard requirements for reporting gifts to the Ramsey County Board.
- Include new conditions on gifts to be accepted by Ramsey County, including the right to refuse any gift, the non-guarantee of permanence of a gift, and the refusal of any gift that places a material obligation or lien upon the county's general budget revenues.
- Clarify other language and provides definitions of gift categories.

The proposed delegation of authority by the County Manager to department directors for the acceptance of gifts includes only personal property and not monetary gifts. Because Resolution 88-554 grants authority to the Parks and Recreation Director to accept gifts of cash or personal property up to \$500 in value, this resolution should be rescinded.

Two additional exceptions were added to this policy revision, including gifts for water, sewer, or combined systems, which may only be accepted by the Ramsey County Board, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 116A.23; and gifts for the Ramsey County Law Library, which may only be accepted by the Law Library Board of Trustees, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 134A.05.

Upon county board approval of the amendments to the Administrative Code and rescission of relevant resolutions, county staff will accordingly revise its administrative policy on gifts and donations and develop enhanced procedures for tracking and reporting gifts and donations to enhance accountability, transparency, and ease of administration.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the amendments to Administrative Code, Chapter 5.40.03, Acceptance of Gifts Policy.
2. Direct the Chief Clerk to amend the Administrative Code to reflect the approved amendments.
3. Rescind Resolution 85-549, to withdraw authority from the Trustees of the Ramsey County Public Library to accept gifts to the Library.
4. Rescind Resolution 88-554, to withdraw authority from the Parks and Recreation director to accept gifts of cash or personal property up to \$500 in value.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Reinhardt, seconded by Commissioner Frethem. Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Reinhardt, and Xiong

Absent: - 1: Ortega

By: 
Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board